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ABSTRACT

Although researchers have investigated quality and cost of residential care, little is known about the people who own and manage residential care facilities. In an attempt to find out more about these managers, members of the National Association of Residential Care Facilities (NARCF) were surveyed. Members (N=175) responded to questionnaires asking about their background, perceived training needs, motivations, supervisory style, stress, and job satisfaction. Results showed that approximately one-third of the respondents chose the field because of a love of older people. More than one-half had college degrees, with about 40% having had coursework in geriatrics. Respondents reported an average work week of over 58 hours. Respondents exhibited a high rate of job satisfaction, with over 94% reporting they liked their jobs. Twenty-seven percent reported feeling stress all or most of the time. The most used coping mechanisms were concentrating on what had to be done next and keeping one's feelings from interfering with other things too much. Respondents scored slightly above the mean on a warmth of personality scale. Respondents exhibited a wide range of leisure time activities. Future work in this area will examine in more detail personality characteristics of the managers, differences as a function of type and size of the facility, and gender differences among managers. (ABL)

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CHARACTERISTICS OF OWNERS OF RESIDENTIAL CARE FACILITIES

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CHARACTERISTICS OF OWNERS OF RESIDENTIAL CARE FACILITIES

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Abstract. Although researchers have investigated quality and cost of care (e.g., Glasscote et al, 1976; Mor, Gutkin, & Sherwood, 1985), little is known about the people who own and manage residential care facilities. In an attempt to find out more about these managers, we surveyed NARCF's membership about their backgrounds, perceived training needs, motivations, supervisory style, stress, and job satisfaction. The result is a profile of the people who run residential care facilities.

Introduction. As the population ages, we need to find ways to improve residential care. Recruitment and training of residential care facility managers requires that we know more about the people who successfully manage facilities. This survey was developed to find out more about these people--their motivations, their stresses, and their training needs.

Method. Surveys were mailed to 1000 NARCF members. 175 respondents from 40 different states returned completed questionnaires.

Results. Table 1 describes the respondents and Table 2 describes their facilities.

Table 1. About the respondents

Their facilities	Demographics	Experience
42.1% corporations	avg. age=41-50	avg. # yrs in RCF=6-10
32.7% private	6-10 years RCF	avg. length in community=5 yr
18.1% private nonprofit	54% female	
7.0% nonprofit, religious	68.6% married	

College Education	Workshops
55% have at least college degree	78.6% have had workshop in geriatrics
30% degree in Health	
25% degree in Business	63.6% have had workshop mentally ill
11% degree in Social Work	Reasons for choosing field
40% have had univ. course in geriatrics	33% "love old people"
33.3% have had univ. course mentally ill	20.3% "saw need for services"
	17.4% "family business"

Table 2. About the facilities.

Type	location	description
58.6%=corporations	38.9%=towns	36.5% remodeled house
3.1%=nonprofit, relig.	24.6%=rural	14.1% remodeled motel
17.7%=private	17.1%=suburb	5.0% former nursing home
20.6%=private nonprofit	19.3%=city	18.2% newly built for RCF
		26.2% part of multi-service complex

Avg % of residents in each category*		# facilities owned	# beds
chronic mental illness	37.3%	61.1% own 1	16.8%<10
physical disability	18.6%	25.7% own 2-3	32.9%<20
Mental retardation	25.6%	5.8% own 4-5	49.1%<30
Alzheimer/dementia	27.6%	7.4% own >5	71.3%<50
elderly,no major disabil.	60%		88%<100

*These do not add to 100% since some facilities do not have all categories.

Respondents work hard--they report an average work week of 58.6 hours per week. Table 3 shows how they spend their time.

Table 3. Average time spent in various activities

Hours /Wk.	Activity
11.16	Direct resident care
9.53	Other
8.67	Direct supervision of personal care of staff
6.89	Direct supervision of cooks, cleaning, grounds staff
6.80	Walking through facility to observe
5.55	Talking to outside professionals (physicians, nurses, mental health workers)
5.13	Ordering or picking up supplies
4.43	Educational activity for self or staff
4.42	Talking to ppotential residents or their families
4.38	Talking to community resident resources
3.79	Clarifying regulations, SII, medicaid, and other government requirements
3.59	Transporting residents

NARCF was particularly interested in learning not just about the business side, but also more about the people who run residential care facilities. We found, first, that they are an unusually satisfied group. 94.6% reported either liking their job, being enthusiastic about it, or loving it. The average response was "I am enthusiastic about my job."

96.5% reported feeling satisfied with their job half the time or more. The average response was that they were satisfied most of the time. Respondents did report their work to be stressful. Table 4 shows some of their coping mechanisms.

Table 4. Coping strategies

Avg. response*	Item
3.0	I just concentrated on what I had to do next
2.9	I tried to keep my feelings from interfering with other things too much
2.5	I talked to someone about how I was feeling
2.4	I stood my ground and fought for what I wanted
2.0	I made a promise to myself that things would be better next time.
1.5	I made light of the situation, or refused to get too serious about it
1.4	I criticized or lectured myself
1.3	I thought about how a person I admire would handle the situation, and used that as a model.
1.2	I jogged or exercised
1.1	I expressed anger to the person who caused the problem
1.0	I tried to forget the whole thing
0.5	I tried to make myself feel better by eating, smoking, or using drugs or medication

*Based on a four point scale, in which 4=used a great deal; 0=not used.

Twenty-seven percent of respondents reported feeling stress all or most of the time. More than half reported stress more than half the time. Of those willing to make a comparison, 67% felt their work was more stressful than other occupations. 29% felt that their particular situations was more stressful than that of others in the same occupation.

We thought personality might provide clues as to how and why people under stress maintained such positive attitudes. We were particularly interested in personality variables such as Warmth and Dominance. Both males and females scored just slightly above mean on Factor A (Warmth) on the 16PF. People scoring high on A are described as good natured, easygoing, cooperative, attentive to people, and warmhearted. These are traits that one normally associates with caregivers. It is interesting that this sample so closely mirrors the general population on this trait. In later studies we will examine Factor A as a function of type and size of institution to determine if "warm" managers select different kinds of facilities.

Not surprisingly, for both males and females, scores on Warmth were significantly correlated with job satisfaction ($r=.301$, $p=.001$ for males and $r=.253$, $p=.013$ for females). Warmth was unrelated to perceptions of stress. Overall respondents scored significantly higher on Factor E (Dominance) than average ($t=5.35$, $df>120$, $p<.001$). People

scoring high on Dominance are described as assertive, independent, stern, and controlling. For women, high dominance was related to less perceived stress (r=-.348, p=.001). For males, stress and dominance were unrelated (r=-.066). That is to say that women who lack assertiveness and are less controlling feel MORE stress. Dominance was not related to job satisfaction. Later research will examine gender differences in more detail.

Finally, we asked respondents about their leisure time and their families. Table 5 shows their wide range of interests and their families' involvement in their facilities.

Table 5. Lifestyles of residential care facilities owners

Leisure time		Family
Dinner at nice restaurant	33.3%	41.7% spouse also works in facility
Hike in the woods	26.7%	14.2% of children also live in facility
Jog	6.1%	19.6% of parents also own a facility
Movies	6.1%	25.1% of parents worked in a facility
Symphony	5.5%	20.4% own facility their parents worked in
TV	4.2%	Travel
Read	9.1%	66.5% travelled extensively in U.S.
		72.3% travelled to foreign country

Conclusions. Staffing residential care facilities with well trained and well suited managers is essential for high quality care. This survey provides an indepth look at the interests and motivations of residential care managers. Most striking is their high level of satisfaction despite long hours and stressful conditions.

Our future work in this area will look in more detail at the personality characteristics of managers, at differences as a function of type and size of the facility, and gender differences among managers.

References

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